SNOW BOUND AT EAGLE'S

BY BRET HARTE.

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CHAPTER VI.

The laughter that followed was interrupted. by a sudden backing of the dogs in the outer | wretched carenses-are received with the clearing. Zenomia rose laxily and strode to the window. It relieved links of certain | facts which may lead to more serious accuse embarenssing reflections autgested by her

"If it ain't that God-fee-alien fool Dick to him, while attempting with barefaced bringing up processors from the show bound effrontery to establish a rival "carrying" up stage in the roul! I reckon I've got business in one of the express company's own suthin' to any to that ! But the later appear | conches'-I call that a good point." He incore that the proxy couried a permission from view of such an emergency, checked her ac-"That's like paw," shu soldiequiled aggricy offy; "shuttin' me up and set- and suspicious mystery. The presence of a the dogs on everybody for a week, and Jackson N. Stanner, esq.' (that's me), 'special it's his house and his whishy, and they kin be thoroughly probed. Hed to put that in take it, but they don't get me to help 'em."

educators description to the party. Apart | gentleman for the facts," an the meantal autocomban which, on such proprietts, those in presention always reel tuckined to resist the discripted querulousness and aggreeable attitude of these fresh come nuthorny over the others. He was loud, insuming and dresied with vulgar preten-He quality deposed himself in the comic vacated by Z-noble, and called for

"I reson yearli how to help, yourself," said Dawlies dayle, as the summons met with no "There are only two women in the house, and I rocken their hands are full

"I can it deal uncivil treatment," said the man raising his voice; and Hennicker had before any smaller if he don't want his

"You cosher told him that, and mebbe him shrank back in terror he'd he'v come over with yer," returned Rawtion. "He's a mild, soft, ensured by man, is We neglebort: Airch ho, Col. Clinch.

The casual regulation of Clinch's name prodirect the effect which the speaker probably tenancial. The stranger stared at Clinch, who, apparently collisions of the conversation, was blittener insceld, gray eyes at the fire. Dropping his aggressive tene to mere quemler-uses, the man sought the whisky denti day, and belied himself and his comparasism. Fortified by liquor he returned to

I recken you've heard about this yer robtory, colonel," he said, addressing Clinch, with an attempt at easy familiarity.

Without raising his eyes from the fire Clinch briefly assented, "I reckon." "I'm up yer examining into it for the ex-

"Lost much?" miked Rawlins.

"Not so much ex they might bev. That fool Harking had \$100,000 in greenbacks scaled up like an ordinary package of \$1,000, ged gave it to a friend. Bill Guthrie, in the Imple to nick out some unlikely chap among the ... where to take charge of it to Heno. He wouldn't trust the express. Ha! ha!"

The dead oppressive silence that followed his empty laughter made it seem almost artidicial, riawins held his breath and looked at Clinch. Halo, with the instructs of a re party. fined, sensitive man, turned hot with the embarra-strent Clinch should have shown. For that gentleman, without lifting his eyes from the fire, and with no apparent change eight"in his demension, lazily nested:

"Ye didn't ketch the name o' that passen-Naturally, not For when Guthrie hears

what was said agin blue he wouldn't give his name until he heard from him." "And what was said agin him?" asked

Cilneb musicule. What would be said acin a ten that cive for the aslong! Why, there were hat calming against the characters of Bingwood three to u, as far or we kin hear, that aid the Chuch, Robert Rawlins and John Hule, pre-And there were four passengers inside, structs, and that I do hereby apologize to the

on too box. Six were robbed by threef-they of your party sign as witnesses," were a sweet scential lat! Residual they must be studied without bestudient some, but following young, for I have they not up being the opportunity of treating the affair and skylodolled from the station under the as a pike, suggested a drink, protext of locdin' for the robbert" He Involved again, and the laugh was mustly rest this house and big enough for me and that

was only reducing a part of his own certicism on than the ducty milited eye of Chiefs caught his, and absolupely held him down with its paraly ring and dende significconce. Marour stoolf seemed to look from guidty of the last act he had added and abstract. remained metionics and forcumted in over Clinebbeyes a min. Haveling who and probably received the same glamer of warn

remained equally still. "They haven't be red the in-t of it yet, you bet," continued the infutinited stranger. newspaper," be reided, drawing some papers from his pocket; "sathan't just our oil in show things up in a new light. It's time there should be some shange. All the case in' that's been marally slone hoz been by the passengers acin the express and stage company. I propose that the company should don little cusin chamselves. Seef Prince you don't mind my remain' it to ver it just spley enough to suit them newspaper

many pose of authorship, and his five friends, to whom the composition was evi-

"I call it Prize Fuellandmous Passen gera! Bort of runs easy off the tengue, you

"it now appears that the success of the late stage coach robbery near the summit was largely due to the pusillanimity -not to use a more carlous word" - He stopped and looked evolunatorily toward Clinch: "Ye'll see in a minit what I'm settin' at by that ousillanimity of the passengers themselves. 'A now transpires that there were only three robbers who attacked the concis, and that although passengers, driver and express messcaper were fully armed and were double the number of their assailants, not a shot was fired. We mean no reflections upon the wellknown courage of Yuba Bill, nor the experi-

courteons express messenger, both of whom have since confessed to have been more than est mished at the Christian and lamblike subgoin' on. So long," mission of the insiders. Amening stories of some laughable yet sickening incidents of the occasion-such as grown men kaceling in the

applause of his own party. "Don't you?"

be backed down."

kill that man and perhaps others.

and threw it on the floor.

forced hugh.

"Wait! Here!" He produced the paper

"Fick it up and hand it to me. Seven-

Station with this paper, I think I'll go with-

packet, unlocked the doors, and talling up his

But he was by no means satisfied of the l

further complications if he continued to iden

that they had profescally abandoned their

the presence of an authorized party whom

his arged him to remain behind. On the

other hand, the apparent desertion of his

both to his sense of honor and the liking he

had taken to them. But he reflected that he

had already shown his active partisanship,

that he could be of little service to them at

Wild Cat Station, and would be only increas-

ing the distance from his home; and above

dozen of 'em," he said, sotto voce, and then

turned to Stanner. "I'm going to take this

nicate with me hereafter you know where I

am to be found, unless"-be smiled grimly-

utes before I goy"

tempt to appear at his ease.

of the spow bound coach.

"you'd like to see me outside for a few min-

"It is a tootter that concerns the stage

company, not me," said Stanner, with an at-

ifule accompanied Clinch and Rawlins

"I shouldn't like to leave many men alone

with that crowd," said Clinch, pressing Hale's

hand; "and I wouldn't have allowed your

staying behind of I didn't know I could bet

my pain on you. Your offerin' to stay just

puts a clean finish on it. Look yer, Hale, 1

didn't cotton much to you at first; but of you

through the kitchen to the stables. The ost-

ler, Dick, had already returned to the rescue

paper to Wild Cat. If you want to commu-

all, an impatient longing for independent

overcost and rifle turned to if to go.

"it's just h-II," said Clinch, musingly,

"'Yet the affair," resumed the stranger,

from his manuscript, " 'is locked up in great

Half inclined to resent this implied sugges pletely if their lives were only spared; of one whispered discussion among the party ceased of the passengers hiding under the seat, and on his entering, and an awkward silence folonly being dislodged by pulling his cont talls: of menial service for the preservation of their greatest gusto; but we are in possession of crossed over to the hearth.

"The old kernel's d-d peppery and high tions. Although one of the passengers is said to have lost a large sum of money intrusted reg'lar three fingers o' corn juice, eh?"

"I must beg you to understand distinctly, offensive to myself. If you mean to imply booking into his eyes, said: that he was under the influence of liquor, it is my duty to undeceive you; he was so per- men?" to please the company," he again deprecat- jection to your company by leaving it. I re-They correlate were not a proposessing or ingly explained. "We are indebted to this gret that circumstances do not make it convenient for me to exercise that privilege; "The plat you want to make in that article," | but if I am obliged to put up with your said Clinch, rising, but still directing his face | presence in this room, I strongly insist that of your conversation "

ken see, ez that no three men kin back down six unless they be cowards, or are willing to | The effect of this deliberate and passionless declaration was more discomposing to "That's the point what I start from," re- the party than Clinch's fury. Utterly unac- a principle that I consider highly dangerous. joined Stanner, "and work up. I leave it to enstoned to the ideas and language suddenly confronting them, they were unable to deter- only helped, I recken," said Zeenie, with a "I can't say ex I agree with you," said the mine whether it was the real expression of colonel dryly. He turned, and still without the speaker, or whether it was a vague badilifting his eyes walked toward the door of | nage | r affectation to which any reply would the room which Zenobia had entered. The nvolve them in ridicule. In a country terkey was on the finish, but Clinch gently corized by practical joking they did not ing the door again locked it from his side. Ing calculated to provoke some response that her take water. What is it?" Hale and Rawlins felt their hearts heat | would constitute them as victims. The imquickly; the others followed Clinch's slow | mediate effect upon them was that complete | of her confidence, of their isolation, of the movements and downcust mien with amused silence in regard to himself that Hale de seloquence of her dark eyes, at first tempted curiosity. After locking the other outlet sired. They drew together again and con | Hale to a reply of simple gailantry; a old den pulled down some day. He man't any from the room and putting the kers in his versed in whispers, while Hale, with his eyes graver consideration of the same circum Letter than men that hey been pleated up pocket, Clinch returned to the fire. For the fixed on the fire, gave himself up to some stances froze it upon his lips.

st time he lifted his eyes; the man nearest what late and useless reflection. He could scarcely realize his position. For "I am the man," he said slowly, taking de- however he might look at it, within a space | didn't cotton to the Kernel and Rawlins liberate breath between his sentences, "who of twelve hours he had not only changed much more than you did to Stanner. They gave up those greenbacks to the robbers. I some of his most cherished opinions, but he ain't your kind." and one of the three passengers you have had acted in accordance with that change in lampsoned in that paper, and these gentle- a way that made it seem almost impossible the thought be had honorably avoided. men beside me are the other two," He stop- for him ever to recant. In the interests of ped and looked around him. "You don't be- law and order he had engaged in an unlaw- "I had stayed to see you?" lieve that three men can back down six! Inhand disorderly pursuit of criminals, and More than that, I'll show you how one man criminals, but with the only party appear pause, when she rose and walked to the chim can do it; for, by the living God, if you ently authorized to pursue them. More than don't hand over that paper l'Hhall you where that, he was finding himself committed to a stooping and listening over the roughly one of you moves he and you are dead men- Twenty-four hours ago, if any one had told room below. "I wonder what's going on." him that he would have condoned an illegal Before he had finished speaking Hale and | not for its abstract justice, or assisted to comhow or why he had done so, but he was knew he would not now feel it an insult per- stable beyond. equally conscious, without knowing why, of | plexed him still more. In these circumfixing his eye on one of the other party, and

to kill him. He did not attempt to reason; he only knew that he should do his best to "One, " said Clinch, lifting his derringer, able criticism on his inconsistency, and was "Look here, colonel-I swear I didn't know t was you. Come-d-n it! I say-see here," stammered Stanner, with white cheeks, that the door leading to the kitchen was found it as they had expected-deserted, not during to glance for aid to his stupefied oly to Stanger. It was evidently moving now so as to attract his attention, without going myself a moment ago." disturbing the others. It presently opened | She remained silent, gazing out of the wining figure of the young girl gided lightly

Stranger hastily scrambled to his feet, picked up the paper, and handed it to the colouel. rose carelessiv as it going out, and, putting crowd has vamesed the ranch, and this yer I was only joking, colonel," he said; with a | on his hat, entered the kitchen as the retreat-"I'm glad to hear it. But as the joke is in toward the stables. She ascended a few open black and white, you wouldn't mind saying steps as if to a hay loft, but stopped before a so in the same fashion. Take that rea mal low door. Pushing it open, she preceded him ink and write as I dictate. 'I certify that I | into a small room, apparently under the roof, ap that sum o' money, lize a chaw of to- am satisfied that the above statement is a base | which curredy allowed her to stand upright By the light of a stable lantern hanging from is beam be saw that, though poorly turnished. it here some evidence of feminine to te and imbitation. Motioning to the only chair, she same. Sign it. That'll do. Now let the rest sented herself on the edge of the bed, with her hands clasping her knees in her familiar attiudo. Her face hore traces of recent acita ion, and her eyes were shiring with tears. By the closer light of the lantern he was sur "Excuse me," said Clinch squietly, "but ez

prised to find it was from laughter. "I reckened you'd be right lonely down then with that Stanner crowd, particlerly after that little speech o' your'n, so I sez to maw talkin' a furrin tengue all along, but I-sake Hawlins rose to follow him; Hale alone benitated. The rapid occurrences of the last bull hour gave him no time for reflection. Welster unabridged seateness on 'em." She stopped and rocked backward and forward with a laugh that, subdued by the proximity altisugh he admitted its rude justice, and of the roof and the fear of being overheard. fell he would have done so again. A fene of was by no mens unmusical. "I'll tell ve this, and an instinct that he might be led into whot got me, though! That part commence tify himself with Clin hand Rowlins; the fact ing: Tackamstances over which I ve no con-

"Oh, come! I didn't say that," interrupted quest, and that it was really supplimited by Hale, laughing.

they had already come in conflict with-all cise the privilege of kickin' yer out to that extent," she continued: "but if I cannot commundes at the last moment was opposed is that it's a d-d sight better than your company'-or suthin' like that! And then the way you minded your stops and let your voice rise and fall jest ez easy ez if you wos a First Render in large type. Why, the kernel wasn't nowhere. His cussin' didn't come within a mile o' yourn. That Stanner jist turned valler."

action finally decided him, "I think I will stay here," he said to Clinch, "unless you Hale, not knowing whether to be pleased or "I'm afraid you are laughing at me," said vexed at the girl's amusement. the enemy, but looked approval. "Keep

"I reckon I'm the only one that dare do it then," said the girl, simply. "The kernel sez your eves skinned, and you're good for a the way you turned round after he'd done his cussin', and said yer believed you'd stay and take the responsibility of the whole thingand did in that kam, soft, did-anybody-speakto-me style-was the neatest thing he'd seen yet! No! Maw says I ain't much on man-

ners, but I know a man when I see him." For an instant Hale gave himself up to the delicious flattery of unexpected, unintended and apparently uninterested compliment Becoming at last a little embarrassed under the frank curiosity of the giri's dark eyes be

changed the subject, "Do you always come up here through the stablesf" he asked, glansing round the room, which was evidently her own.

"I reckon," she answered, half abstract-"There's a ladder down thar to edly. wall-"but it's hundler the other way, and ever want a friend, call on Ringwood Clinch." | quiek,"

"The same here, old man," said Rawlins, This palpable suggestion-borne out by

hurried conference with the old woman at details-that the house had been planned the woodshed, "and trust to Zeenie to give with reference to sudden forny or escape reyou a hint of there's anythin' underhanded awakened his former uneasy reflections. Zeenie, who had been watching his face, added, "It's no slouch, when b'ar or painters tion of protection, yet half pleased at the idea | hang round nights and stampede the stock, of a confidence with the handsome girl he to be able to swing yourself on to a hoss, had seen. Hale returned to the room. A whenever you hear a row goin' on outside, "Do you mean that you"-

"Paw used, and I do now, sense I've com lowed, which Hale did not attempt to break into the room." She pointed to a nondeas he quietly took his sent again by the fire, script garment, half cloak, half habit, hang-He was presently confronted by Stanner, ing on the wall, "I've been outer bed and who, with an affectation of easy familiarity, on Pitchpine's back as far ez the trail five minutes arter I heard the first bellow."

Hale regarded her with undisguised as toned when he's got a little more than his tonishment. There was nothing at all Amagonian or horsey in her manners, nor was there even the robust physical contour that Mr. Stanner," said Hale, with a return of might have been developed through such his habitual precision of statement, "that I experiences. On the contrary she seemed to regard any elighting allusion to the gentle- lazily efferminate in body and mind. Heed man who has just left not only as in exceed- less of his critical survey of her, she book ingly had taste coming from you, last very oned him to draw his chair nearer, and, "Whatever possessed you to take to huntin'

feetly in possession of his faculties as to ex- Hale was staggered by the question, but then letting the whole singe service pass detective agent to the company, and his staff press not only his own but my opinion of nevertheless endeavored to explain. But he Corongle one discratish out management will, in town, is a guaranty that the mystery will your conduct. You must also admit that he was surprised to find that his explanation apwas discriminating enough to show his ob- peared stilted even to himself, and, he could not doubt, was utterly incomprehensible to life!" He started. "And it's horrid to have the girl. She nodded her head, however, and

> "Then you haven't anythin' agin' George: "I don't know George," said Hale, smiling. and his conversation to the fire, "ex far ex I | it is not made unendurable with the addition | "My proceeding was against the highway-

"Well, he was the highwayman." "I mean it was the principle I objected to-"Well, he is the principal, for the others sigh, "and I reckon be is dangerous."

Hale saw it was useless to explain. The girl continued: "What made you stay here instead of go

in' on with the kernel? There was suthin' opened the door, removed the key, and clos- doubt but that this was a new form of hear- else besides you wanting to make that Stan-A light sense of the propinquity of beauty

> "I don't know," he returned awkwardly. "Well, Pil tell von," she said, "You

In his embarrassment Hale blundered upon "Suppose," he said, with constrained laugh,

"I reckon I ain't your kind, neither," she Well. I'll show you how it can be done. Ind actually come in conflict, not with the replied promptly. There was a momentury ney. "It's very quiet down there," she said. you sit! I'll give you until I count tent if certain sympathy with the criminals, boarded floor that formed the ceiling of the

In the belief that this was a delicate hint for his return to the party he had left, linie Rawlins had both risen, as if in concert, with mit an illegal not for the same purpose, he rose, but the girl passed him burriedly, and, their weapons drawn. Halo could not tell would have felt himself insuited. That he opening the door, cast a quick glance into the

"Just as I reckoned—the horses are gone stances the fact that he was separated from too. They've skedaddled," she said, blankly. that he should, in the event of an offray, try | his family, and as it were from all his past | Hale did not reply. In his embarra-sment life and traditions by a chance accident, did a moment ago the idea of taking an equally not disturb him greatly; indeed, he was for sudden departure had flashed upon him. the first time a little doubtful of their probe | Should be take this as a justification of that impulse, or how! He stood irresolutely by no means in a harry to subject himself | gazing at the girl, who turned and began to descend the stairs silently. He followed. Lifting his eyes, he was suddenly aware. When they reached the lower room they

> slowly opening. He had thought he heard it | "I hope I didn't drive them away," said creak once or twice during his deliberate re- Hale, with an uneasy look at the troubled faces of the wirl "For I really land an idea of

> sufficiently wide to show the face of Zeenie, dow. Then, turning with a sh, ht shrug of who, with a gesture of caution toward his her shoulders, she said, half defiantly: companions, beckened him to join her. He "What's the use now! Oh, maw! the Stanner stranger kalkalates to stay!"

CHAPTER VII.

week of mingled clouds and smisline by day, but a more difficult one." of rain over the green plateau and snew on the mountain by night. Each marning had in the encompassing wall of their prison; if the house,

to the meadows nearer the house, and at a said Kate, swidenly, safe distance from the fringe of wilderness "Yes," answered Falkner; "they seem to Nevertheless, the two figures lounging on Let us hope the latter."

heerd you exhort 'em! Maw allowed you wer the slope at surset gave very little indication "I looked at them with a glass every day," of any serious quality in the situation. Indeed, so far as appearances were concerned, bustin' into a yell when yer jet drawed them | Kate, who was returning from an afternoon | grown cat you call a California lion, and a stroll with Falkner, exhibited, with feminine inconsistency, a decided return to the world of fashion and conventionality just as she was Falkner. effectually excluded from it. She had not only discarded her white dress as a concession to the practical evidence of the surrounding winter, but she had also brought out a feather hat and sable must which had once graced a fashionable suburb of Boston. Even Falkner | otic's own kind." had exchanged his slouch hat and picturesque Kate, under the excuse of the exigencies of earnestness. the season. Within a stone's throw of the thicket, turbulent with the savnge forces of nature, they waiked with the abstraction of | welf very amusing; and that the fox and | You have not over exerted yourself ?" people hearing only their own voices; in the | the wolf"

face of the solemn peaks clothed with white austerity they talked gravely of dress. "I don't mean to say," said Kate demorely, "that you're to give up the serape entirely; you can wear it on rainy nights and when you ride over here from your friend's house to spend the evening-for the sake of old times," she added, with an unconscious air of referring to an already antiquated friendship; "but you must admit it's a little too gorgeous and theatrical for the sunlight of day and the public highway."

"But why should that make it wrong, if the experience of a people has shown it to be a garment best fitted for their wants and requirements?" said Falkner argumentatively. "But you are not one of those people," said Kate, "and that makes all the difference. You look differently and act differently, so that there is something irreconcilable between your clothes and you that makes you look

"And to look odd, according to your civilfed prejudices, is to be wrong, said Falkner bitterly.

"It is to seem different from what one really is which is wrong. Now, you are a maw's room"-pointing to a trap door be. mining superintendent, you tell me. Then side the broad chimney that served as a you don't want to look like a Spanish brigand, as you do in that scrape. I am sure if nearer the hosses of you want to get away you had ridden up to a stage coach while was in it I'd have banded you my watch we and coolness of Bracy Tibletts, the extending his hand as he appeared from a what he remembered of the other domestic not offended? she added, with a laugh, must -leave this place at once. It's

which did not, however, concent a certain earnestness, "I suppose I ought to have said no longer." I would have given it gladly to such a romantic figure, and perhaps have got out and Hale comes back. Have you found a trail?" danced a samband or bolero with you-if "No, no; that's not what I mean." that is the thing to do newadays. Well!" she "Well, it strikes me it ought to be, if you she said, after a dangerous pause, "consider

"Not but"-

something between the two."

thing going."

for the worst?"

this suspense.

be willing to have them forgive us?"

Ned. Stop a moment; listen at that door,

Mrs. Hale has the trend of an angel, with the

tude with a sensational story about myself.

It's not giving her a fair show. You know

her seem more a victim. Can you say the

"But you did not advise me to keep aloof

"I thought you might make the best of the

situation and pay her some attention, because

honor, to separate from the girl forever,"

reverie with the full and unrestrained sigh of

"Dear me! How portentous! Really, I

a man who believes himself alone, he was

"I don't understand."

same of yourself and that Puritan girl?

from her; on the contrary, you"-

you could not go any further."

selfish, like"---

"Ned!"

"No," said Fallener, reddening; "but 1

she won't turn you out of the house,"

be my only excuse for telling her."

when she comes to the window?"

care little"___

"I don't understand you."

"But you will, you mean? Don't, just

"That depends. I don't know how you're

lying when I'm not with you. If you're

and talking of your class in Sunday school.

"But I cannot live this perpetual lie."

that I've said it." Beacon Street, and she thinks it rather pre-He had been walking a little before her mature on a week's acquaintancef" with his face turned toward the distant mountain. Suddenly he stopped and faced

"You would have given enough of your time to the highwayman, Miss Scott, as would have enabled you to identify him for the police-and no more. Like your brother, you would have been willing to sacrifice yourself for the benefit of the laws of civilization and good order."

If a denial to this assertion could have been expressed without the use of speech, it was certainly transparent in the face and eyes of the young girl at that moment. If Falkner had been less self-conscious he would have seen it plainly. But Kate only buried her face in her litted muff, slightly raised her pretty shoulders, and, dropping her tremulous cyclids, walked on. "It seems a pity," she said after a pause, "that we cannot preserve our own miserable existence without taking something from others-sometimes even a

thing for the invalid's supper," she continued lying either. "I saw a bare in the field yonder." "You mean that jackass rabbit?" he said abstractedly. "What you please. It's a pity you didn't

to remind you that you have yet to kill some

take your gun instead of your rifle." "I brought the rifle for protection." "And a shotgun is only aggressive, I sup-

Falkner looked at her for a moment and then, as the bare sublenly started across the

open a hundred yards away, brought the rifle to his shoulder. A long interval-as it seemed to Kate-clapsed; the animal appeared to be already safely out of range, when the rifls suddenly cracked; the hare bounded in the air like a ball and dropped motionless. The girl looked at the marksman in undisguised admiration, "Is it quite dend?" she said timidly.

"It never knew what streek it." *It certainly looks less brutal than shooting it with a shotgun, as John does, and then not killing it outright," said Kate, "I hate what is called sport and sportsmen, but a rifle seems"-

"What?" said Folkner. "More-gentlemanly."

She had raised her pretty head in the air, and, with her hand shading her eyes, was looking around the clear ether, and said meditatively, "I wonder-no matter,"

"It is something," said Falkner, with an armised smile, reloading his rifle.

"Oh, nothing."

"Well, you once promised me an engle's feather for my hat. Isn't that thing an "I am afraid it is only a hawk." "Well, that will do, Shoot that!"

Her eyes were sparkling. Falkner with drew his own with a slight smile and raised his rifle with provoking deliberation.

"Are you quite sure it's what you want? he asked demurely. "Yes-quick!"

Nevertheless, it was some minutes before the rifle cracked again. The wheeling bird suddenly struck the wind with its wings ashint, and then fell like a plummet at a

distance which showed the difficulty of the fent. Falkner started from her side before returned. the bird reached the ground. He returned to her after a lapse of a few moments, bearing a ungrateful one." trailing wing in his hand. "You shall make your choice," he said gayly, "Are you sure it was killed outright? "Head shot off," said Falkner briefly.

"And, besides, the full would have telled it," said Kate conclusively. "It's lovely, I suppose they call you a very good shot? "They-whe!" "Oh! the people you know-your friends

and their sisters." "George shoots better than I do, and has had more experience. I've seen him do that A week had passed at Eagle's Court-a with a pistol. Of course not such a long shot,

Kate did not reply, but her face showed a conviction that as an artistic and gentle-spoken! Let the pule face with the black brought its fresh greenness to the winter girt | mondy performance it was probably inthe barrier that separated its dwellers from who had pecked up the hare also, again took | 600 the world beyond. There was little change | lds place by her side, as they turned toward |

anything, the snowy circle round them seemed to have drawn its lines nearer day by when we were walking here, you pointed out the window, the boilows in his temples and the window, the boilows in his temples are the window, the boilows in his temples and the window, the boilows in his temples are the window and the window are the window and the window are the window and the window are t day. The immediate result of this restricted | that rock on the mountain where the poer limit had been to confine the range of cattle | animals had taken refuge from the snow!"

now invaded by the prowling tread of preda. have diminished. I am afraid you were right other times have timiled his sensitive car. Degged bim to shoot a bird to get a feather they have either eaten each other or es ...ped.

said Kate, and they've got down to only shartled by the soft laugh of Mrs. Hale, who comes to the worst here you would probably four. There's a bear and that shabby, over- had entered the room unperceived. wolf, and a creature like a fox or a squirrel." "it's a pary they're not all of a kind," said tote between your-olf and some old flame, 1

Sydyle "There'd be nothing to keep them from be- | California. I thought you never had any ing comfortable together." "On the contrary. I should think it would

be simply awful to be shat up entirely with the light, and the unmistakable expression of "Then you believe it is possible for them, It was spared her. There was, however, still serape for a beaver overcost and tur cap of with their different natures and habits, to be enough dissonance in his manner to affect Hale's which had been pressed upon him by happy together." said Falkner, with sudden her quick feminine sense, and when she drew

"I believe," said Kate burriedly, "that like timidity, the bear and the hon find the fox and the

"Welt?" said Falkner, stopping short. "Well, the fox and the wolf will carry away a much better opinion of the lion and bear than they had before."

hawk's wing. It's terrible."

They had reached the house by this time, too tight. There is nothing so irritating to and for some occult reason Kate did not imone as the scusation of being tightly bound." mediately enter the parlor, where she had left her sister and the invalid, who had althat covered his kness, the thoughtful tenready been promoted to a sofa and a cushlen derness of the blue veined hids, and the deliby the window, but proceeded directly to her own room. As a maneuver to avoid meeting Mrs. Hale, it was scarcely neces and brought back the reckless fire into his aided exercise with an extempore crutch on sary, for that lady was already in advance of blue eves. ber on the staircase, as if she had left the parlor a moment before they entered the house. Falkner, too, would have preferred well as myself!" the company of his own thoughts, but Lee, apparently the only unpreoccupied, all pervading and boyishly alert spirit in the party, hailed him from within, and obliged him to present himself on the threshold of the par- from him with a slight increase of color. | ideas and opinions. That exception was made

Past out here?"

still carrying. Eying the latter with affected concern, Lee said gravely: "Of course, 1 "What would you call bad newst," asked Falkner," she said, carelessly. can cat it, Ned, and I dare say it's the best Lee, clasping his hands behind his head and part of the fowl, and the hare isn't more leaning back on the sofa, but without with than enough for the women, but I had no drawing his eyes from her face. idea we were so reduced. Three hours and

a half gunning, and only one hare and a convalescence or break up our little family Perceiving that his friend was alone, Falkner dropped his burden in the hall and strode and purse without a word. There! you are rapidly to his side. "Look here, George, we life of forgetting and being forgotten. But," the vexel with Mr. Lee's chaffing him about

no use talking; I can stand this sort of thing anything happened! Is there really any go further to-day and bring home larger news from-from the trails? Yesterday Mr. "Nor can I, with the door open. Shut it, Falkner said the snow had recommenced in the pass. Has he seen anything, noticed anyand say what you want quick, before Mrs.

thing different." She looked so very pretty, with the rare, genuine and youthful excitement that transexpect to get away. Have you proposed to figured her wearied and wearying regularity dropped eyelids. of feature, that Lee contented himself with

inhaled the perfume of some flower, "Why do you look at me so, Mr. Lee?" she asked, with a slight smile. "I believe some

thing has happened. Mr. Palkner has brought you some intelligence." "He kas certainly found out something I

walking round with that girl, singing hymns | did not foresee." "And that troubles you!"

or if you're insinuating that you're a million-"It does." aire, and think of buying the place for a "Is it a secret?"

summer hotel, I should say you'd better quit that kind of lying. But, on the other hand, "Then I suppose you will tell it to ment I don't see the necessity of your dancing dinner," she said, with a little tone of relief. round here with a shot gun, and velling for "I am afenid if I tell it at all I must tell it Harkins' blood, or counting that package of now," he said, glancing at the door.

greenbacks in the lan of Miss Scott, to be "You must do as you think best," she said. truthful. It seems to me there ought to be coldly, "as it seems to be a secret after all." She besitated, "Kate is dressing, and will friend and the thoughtful tenderness of his "But, George, don't you think-you are on not be down in some time."

such good terms with Mrs. Hale and her "So much the better. For I am afraid that mother—that you might tell them the whole | Ned has made a poor return to your hospis | with softly appreciative eyes, "if women are story! That is, tell it in your own way; they tality by falling in love with her." will bear anything from you and believe it."

"Thank you; but suppose I don't believe in | searcely a week." "I am afraid we won't agree as to the "You know what I mean! You have a length of time necessary to appreciate and and Lee, with his own arm over Falkner's way, d-n it, of waking everything seem like love a woman. I think it can be done in a matter of course, and the most natural seven days and four hours, the exact time we have been here."

"Well, suppose I did. Are you prepared "Yes; but as Kate was not in when you arrived, and did not come until later, you Falkner was silent for a moment and then must take off at least one hour," said Mrs. air contemptationly. "I really don't see any replied, "Yes; anything would be better than | Hale gavly,

"Ned can. I shall not abate a second." "I don't agree with you. Then you would ings?" she continued hurriedly. "He cer- no means certain, Josephine, that Lee's influ-

tainly has not said anything to her." "I mean that their forgiveness would be the "That is his last hold on honor and reason. for him. worst thing that could happen. Look here, And to preserve that little intact he wants to

"But that would be very silly." pervading capacity of neat. Now, listen! I "Do you think so?" he said, looking at her fon't pretend to be in love with anybody fixedly

run away at once.

here but if I were I should hardly take advantage of a woman's helplessness and soli- rather faintly. "Til tell you why," he said, lowering his

should expect to go at once, and that would nate hurdness and aggression, of savege disappointment and equally savage successes. "Go! where! In your procecupation with who has known no other relaxation than dis- already." that girl you haven't even found the trail by sipation or extravagance; a man to whom which Manuel escaped. Do you intend to the idea of the domestic hearth and family camp outside the house and make eyes at her ties only meant weakness, effeminacy, orworse; who had looked for loyalty and devo-"Recouse you think nothing of flirting tion only in the man who buttled for him at with Mrs. Hale," said Falkner bitterly, "you his right hand in danger, or shared his privations and sufferings. Think of such a "My dear Ned," said Lee, "the fact that man, and imagine that an accident has sud-Mrs. Hale has a husband and knows that she | dealy placed him in an atmosphere of nurity, less wrong than it would be now, or make dream, on terms of equality with a pure woman who had never known any other life

tempt her to a sperifice?" "But-is Mr. Falkner all that?" Falkner walked rapidly to the fireplace and

"Forgive me, George-I'm a fool-and an he demurely, "But that, the way a man in and mammat" she asked, in an interval of Lee did not reply at once, although he took and retained the hand Falkner had impul-

slowly, after a panse, "that you will say noths | "I need all my persuasive powers in that some morning very early and eatch it when ing yet to either of these women. I ask to for way for myself," said Lee holdly,

your own sake and this girl's, not for mine If, on the contrary, you are tempted to do so ing," she said. Nevertheless, she did not move you are tempted to do so from any Quix-tie idea of honor, remember | nway. "It is Kate coming," sis added hur- Hale. that you will only precipitate something that | riedly, stopping to pick up her work basket. "Oh! it's a fairy snow that he told me all will oblige you, from that same sense of watch had slipped with Lee's hand from her about; it only comes when the san comes up

"Enough!" said be, with a quick return of assistance, Lee deplering from the sofa his want come true! Wouldn't that be nice! his old reckless gayety. "Shoot-off-his-mouth, own utter landbilly to aid her. "It's all my But to the child's astonishment her little the beardless boy chief of the Sierras, has fault, too," he said to Kate, but looking at Mrs. Hale. "It seems I have a faculty of up sighed. mustache ponder and beware how he talks setting existing arrangements without the domain and a fresh coat of dezzling white to ferior to the one she had witnessed. Falkmer, hereafter to the Rapping Cochitmate Water: power of improving them, or even putting next morning before the valley was warm them back in their places. What shall I do? Nevertheless, as soon as the door had closed | I am willing to hold any number of skeins or | and nent Kate were still penerfully sleeping, upon Falance, Lee's smile vanished. With rewind any quantity of spools. I am sven And Mr. Lee and kept his word and was evi-

the lines in the corners of his eyes seemed to of a hawk for supper." have grown more profound. He remained "That was all my folly, Mr. Lee," said motionless and absorbed in thought so does Kate, with swift mendacity; "he was all the motionless and absorbed in thought so deep that the light rustle of a skirt, that would at time looking after something for you, when I passed unheaded. At last, throwing off his for my hat. And that wing is so pretty."

"It is a pity that more beauty is not edible." said Lee, gravely, and that if the worst because I've been tied by the leg to this sofa almost feel as if I were interrupting a teta-a- and slowly fattened like a Strasbourg goose," Nevertheless his beginning failed somehow

haven't heard anything so old-fashioned and to anuse Kate, and she presently excused horself to rejoin her sister, who had already conservative as that sigh since I have been in slipped from the room. For the first time during their enforced seclusion a sense of re-Fortunately his face was between her and straint and uneasuress affected Mrs. Hale, her sister and Falkner at dinner. The latter addressed himself to Mrs. Scott almost entirely, ennoyance and impatience which passed over Mrs. Hale was fain to bestow an exceptional and marked tenderness on her little daughter ish instinct, insisted on sharing it with Lee, geneer to him it was with a certain maidenher great friend, to Mrs. Hale's uneasy consciousness. Nor was Lee slow to profit by the "You are not worse, Mr. Lee, I hope? child's suggestion, but responded with certain vicarious care-ses that increased the mother's "There's little chance of that with one leg embarrassment. That evening they retired -if not in the grave at least nammified with bandages," he replied, with a bitterness early, but in the intervals of a restless night Kate was aware, from the sound of voices in "Shall I loosen them? Perhaps they are the opposite room, that the friends were equally wakeful.

A morning of bright sunshine and a soft, The light touch of her hand upon the rug | warm air did not, however, bring any change to their new and constrained relations. It only seemed to ofter a reason for Falkner to cate atmosphere that seemed to surround her | leave the house very early for his daily like a perfume cleared his face of its shadow | rounds, and gave Lee that occasion for unthe veranda which allowed Mrs. Hale to pur-"I suppose I'm intolerant of all bends," he sue her manifold duties without the necessity said, looking at her intently, "in others as of keeping him company. Kate also, as if to avoid an accidental meeting with Falkner, Whether or not she detected any double had remained at home with her sister. With merning in his words she was obliged to ac- one exception, they did not make their guests cept the challenge of his direct gaze and, the subject of their usual playful comments raising her eyes to his, draw back a little nor, after the fashion of their sex, quote their for with the hare and hawk's wing he was a squared you had heard bad news just by Mrs. Hale.

"You have had no difference with Mr "No," said Kate, quickly, "Why?"

"I only thought be seemed rather put out at dinner last night, and you didn't propose "Oh, any news that would interrupt your | to go and meet him to-day."

"He must be bored with my company at party," said Mrs. Hale. "You have been times, I dare say," said Kate, with an indifgetting on so well that really it would seem ference quite inconsistent with her rising cruel to have anything interfere with our | color. "I shouldn't wonder if he was a lit- LOOK OUT FOR THE she added with apprehensive quickness, has his sport yesterday, and probably intends to

game, I think Mr. Lee very amusing always, but I sometimes fancy he lucks feel-

"FeePnet You don't know him, Kate," said Mrs. Hale quickly. Shostopped herself, but with a half smiling recollection in her

"Well, he doesn't look very amiable now, drinking in her prettiness as he would have stamping up and down the veranda. Perhaps you'd better go and soothe him."

"I'm really so busy just now," said Mrs. Hale, with sudden and inconsequent energy; "things have got dreadfully behind in the last week. You had better go, Kate, and make him sit down, or he'll be overdoing it, These men never know any medium-in any thiner."

"Contrary to Kate's expectation Palkage returned earlier than usual, and, taking the invalid's arm supported him in a more and bitious walk along the terrace before the house. They were apparently absorbed in conversation, but the two women who observed them from the window could not belo noticing the almost feminine tenderness of Falkner's manner toward his wounded

ministering care. "I wonder," said Mrs. Hale, following them capable of as disinterested friendship as ment "Impossible! He has known her for I never saw anything like the devotion of these two creatures. Look! if Mr. Falknee hasn't got his arm round Mr. Lee's waid, neck, is looking up in his eyes. I declare, Kate, it almost seems an indiscretion to lo

Kate however to Mrs. Hale's indignation throw her pretty head back and sniffed the thing but some absurd sentimentalism of their own, or some mannish wickedness "But are you not mistaken in his feel- they're concocting by themselves. I am by ence over that young man is the best thing

"On the contrary! Lee's influence the only thing that checks his waywardness,? said Mrs. Hale quickly, "I'm sure, If any one makes sacrifices it is Lee; I shouldn't wonder that even now he is making some concession "Why not?" she asked in her turn, but to Falkner, and all those caressing ways of your friend are for a purpose. They're not nach different from us, dear,

voice with a certain intensity of passion un- "Well, I wouldn't stand there and let them like his usual boyish lightheartedness. "Think | see me looking at them as if I couldn't bear of a man whose life has been one of alters, them out of my sight for a moment," said Knte, whisking herself out of the room, "They're conceited enough, heaven knows,

That evening at dinner, however, the two men exhibited no trace of the restraint or un ensiness of the previous day. If they were less impulsive and exuberant, they were still frank and interested, and if the term could be used in connection with men apparently trained to neither self-control nor repose. there was a certain gentle dignity in their manner which for the time had the effect of can't marry me puts us on equal terms. gentleness and more, surrounded him by the lifting them a little above the social level of Nothing that she could learn about me here- refinements of a higher life than he had ever their entertainers. For even with all their after would make a firstation with me any known, and that he found himself, as in a predisposition to the strangers, Kats and Mrs. Hale had always retained a conscious attitude of gentle condescension and superiand yet would understand and pity his. Im- ority toward them-an attitude not incon ngine his loving her! Imagine that the first sistent with a stronger feeling, nor strongether effect of that love was to show him his own, unprovocative of it; yet this evening they inferiority and the immeasurable gulf that Sund themselves impressed with something lay between his life and hers! Would be not more than an equality in the men who had fly rather than brave the disgrace of her mussed and interested them, and they were "You thought I was utterly heartless and a wakening to the truth? Would be not fly perhaps a little more critical and doubtful of rather than accept even the pity that might their own power. Mrs. Hale's little girl, who had appreciated only the seriousness of the situation, had made her own application of "Nothing of the kind, I assure you?" said it. "Are you dowin' away from Aunt Kate silence.

"Really! Mr. Falkner should get you to "How else can I get you the red snow we plead his cause with Kate," said Mrs. Hale saw at sunset the other day on the peak year-

it comes at sunrisc

and coss down and if you eaten ever so little of it in your hand it makes all you this you circle of auditors, even while assenting,

with their faces toward and fit up by its glow,

TO BE CONTINUED. on the first of fact med target to be to be the first target to be the fact that the f

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OPENING CHAPTERS I

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